

London Councils' Grants Committee

Emergency Refuge Accommodation: Eaves

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Summary At its meeting of 18 November 2015 Grants Committee agreed that officers investigate options to address the gap in services caused by Eaves going into administration in October 2015. Eaves were awarded funding in 2013 to deliver emergency refuge accommodation to women who had been a victim of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Members agreed that proposals be taken to the next meeting of the Grants Committee on how to address this gap within the existing budget allocation of £162,950 for the period 1 April 2016-31 March 2017.

Recommendations The Grants Committee is recommended to agree that, subject to continued availability of resources and delivery of the outcomes and meeting the London Councils conditions as set out in a grant agreement between London Councils and the applicant, an award to Ashiana of a grant of £162,950 should be made for the period 1 April 2016- 31 March 2017.

A second option, a grant of £184,950 on the same terms, would deliver additional outcomes outlined in the body of the report but would exceed the allocated amount by £22,000. Further details are outlined in the body of the report. It is anticipated that the additional amount could be absorbed within typical levels of underspend in a given year as outlined in the financial implications at the end of this report, should members decided to proceed with this option.

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20 February 2013, the Grants Committee agreed funding of £162,950 per year to Eaves Housing for Women to deliver refuge accommodation in 2013-15, under specification 2.4 Emergency Refuge Accommodation. At its meeting on 26 November 2014, the Grants Committee agreed funding for 2015-17 at the same level. Eaves focused on delivering emergency refuge accommodation and associated support to women who were victims of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
- 1.2 Eaves Housing for Women went into administration on 31 October 2015. Financial information that Eaves had previously supplied, from their auditors, to London Councils, did not indicate a serious financial concern. We understand this happened following the loss of a large government contract and that Eaves did not reduce its core organisational costs in line with this change. London Councils stopped payment to Eaves as a result of learning of the financial difficulties that Eaves was experiencing.
- 1.3 Grants Committee agreed through urgency procedures in October 2015 a re-allocation of up to £40,000 to Solace Women's Aid to (from the funding originally allocated to Eaves) to accommodate and support up to nine of the women who were previously accommodated by the London Councils funded Eaves refuge. Two of the women who were previously accommodated by Eaves were prevented from becoming street homeless or returning to a trafficker through this allocation of funding (the remaining women were re-housed through other means). Solace Women's Aid is one of the partners, in a partnership led by Ashiana (under the pan-London Ascent partnership) and funded to deliver against London Councils specification 2.4 Emergency Refuge Accommodation.
- 1.4 At its meeting of 18 November 2015 Grants Committee members were provided with an update on the position with Eaves and agreed that officers investigate options to address the gap in services caused by Eaves going into administration for the 2016-17 period. The period was limited to one year given that the Grants Programme is currently under review and members are considering the future of the Grants Programme beyond 2017 on Item 4 of this agenda. Members agreed that proposals be submitted to Grants Committee on how to address this gap within the existing budget allocation of £162,950 for the period 1 April 2016-31 March 2017.

2. Progress

- 2.1 Officers approached the London Councils funded organisation Ashiana to submit a proposal. Ashiana were approached because they are the only other commission, delivering emergency refuge services, under *Specification 2.4: Emergency Refuge Accommodation*. Ashiana have delivered successfully to date and are consistency rated 'green' in the RAG risk rating framework. In addition, Solace Women's Aid, the organisation that stepped in to successfully support women in danger at the point of Eaves' closure, is one of the partners under the Ashiana commission

and are in the partnership proposal put forward by Ashiana. Ashiana were asked to submit proposal on 5 January 2016, and have returned a proposal by the deadline date, 31 January 2016.

2.2 Ashiana has submitted two proposals; one is within the £162,950 agreed allocation (at £162,950). The second proposal is £22,000 over the allocated annual grant amount (at £184,950) and offers an enhanced level of support. Officers are aware that it would be difficult to replicate the Eaves project for one year at the same costs, given that it would be difficult to attract additional funding to supplement the London Councils grant for this period of time. Details of proposals are below with summary of proposed budget at Appendix One.

3. Service Delivery Partnership Proposal from Ashiana

Ashiana propose to extend their current commissioned services, in partnership with women's organisations Nia and Solace Women's Aid:

Option One:

3.1 The partnership proposes to deliver the following services under Option one, if **£162,950** funding is agreed for the period 1 April 2016-31 March 2017:

- **Nia project:** will operate a specialist 5-6 bedroom refuge for single women over the age of 18 in London fleeing violent and abusive situations involving sexual exploitation, prostitution and trafficking. The service will provide direct accommodation based support for approximately 9 women a year, assuming that each service users' length of stay will be approximately 8-12 months. Service users will be single women without children with recourse to public funds (in almost all cases but there could be exceptions on a case by case basis under certain circumstances). Service users may have additional needs including problematic substance use and mental health issues as well as potentially being ex-offenders and having a history of other forms of abuse such as domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse.
- **Solace Women's Aid:** will deliver floating support to 10 women, via a part-time Senior Floating Support Worker, to sexually exploited women in 2nd stage accommodation¹ and will support the women towards independent living. The floating support worker will support women who have successfully moved from 1st stage accommodation². The support will focus on the next stage of women's recovery towards independence and these women will ultimately be resettled into longer term independent accommodation. By providing 2nd stage accommodation, this can provide women with both motivation and a way to view their progress and achievements. The staged approach can also be considered an effective way of 'permitting' women to be at different stages of a process and encouraging them to progress at their own pace and in their own way. The second stage

¹ 2nd stage accommodation offers accommodation which supports independence, once a woman suffering trauma has moved on from refuge accommodation. Solace has secured/ are in the process of securing the 2nd stage accommodation.

² 1st stage accommodation is refuge accommodation, for those fleeing sexual and domestic violence.

accommodation is currently being negotiated with Commonweal Housing. Solace are of the view that the accommodation will be secured by March 2016.

Referrals will come from 1st stage specialist accommodation providers, including the Ascent specialist refuge strand.

- **Ashiana:** will allocate an additional two bed spaces for women with no recourse to public funds, with the aim of housing two women during the year. The funding will cover rent and subsistence costs. Given the lack of move-on accommodation; and the time taken for the Home Office to make decisions on Asylum applications, the figure of two women a year is realistic. In addition, a Legal/Outreach Worker registered with the Office of Immigration Services Commission will provide intensive advice/advocacy to 30 women with no recourse to public funds. This will include basic immigration advice, application for DDVC and advice on SET (DV), preparation of relevant documents, advocacy in relation to enrolling biometrics, access to an appropriate immigration/asylum solicitor, and access to in-house services such as counselling. Ashiana will be the single point of contact which will minimise costs for the women, particularly important for women with children and/or destitute clients.
- Ashiana will also deliver awareness raising sessions specifically around sexual exploitation to approximately 60 professionals a year.

Option two

3.2 The partnership proposes to deliver the following, if **£184,950** funding (under option two) is agreed. The second proposal is largely similar to the first one with additional levels of activities funded leading to a higher numbers of service users. A summary of project activities and service users to be supported are included in **Table Three**:

Table Three: Summary activities and service user numbers (2016-17):

	Option one £162,950	Option two £184,950
	Total number of service users	
Accommodated in refuge	11	15
Accommodated in 2 nd stage accommodation (supporting independent living)	10	16
Supported outreach	80	80
Sexual exploitation awareness raising sessions to professionals	60	60
Service users supported through activities	92	113
Number of activities (includes resettlement plans; workshops; key work sessions)	97	105

4. Partnership Proposal Activities:

Activities and support services to be delivered include:

- Specialist refuge accommodation
- In-house mental health support
- In-house specialist drug/alcohol services
- Independent living, budgeting and life skills
- Specialist exiting prostitution work
- Welfare benefits advocacy and support
- Development of resettlement plans
- Workshops on domestic violence/ substance use and impact of children
- Family support work
- Specialist support to disabled women
- Interpreters and British Sign Language interpreters

5. Primary and Secondary Outcome Targets:

Officers are mindful that the partnership proposal targets, for service users in refuge accommodation, may be impacted by issues of move-on. Since commissions started in 2013, officers have been increasingly aware, through feedback from funded commissions and from borough officers, that the growing issue of the unavailability of housing, which can be used to move service users on from refuge accommodation is impacting the number of women supported through refuge accommodation. In other words, because it is difficult to move women on, this impacts on the numbers of new women accepted into the refuge, affecting overall delivery targets. This is also reflected in consultation responses highlighted in the Item 4 of this meeting. Officers are working with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (Mopac) and policy colleagues to look at the link between housing and domestic violence.

6. Specific Requirements of Strand

Officers have also reviewed information submitted within the partnership proposals about the partnership organisations delivery of specialist refuge provision. The partnership organisations have been delivering specialist Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services for over 40 years. Partnership organisations are also very experienced in working with local authorities and other refuge providers/ women's organisations. The partnership organisations are also highly experienced in safeguarding issues; and will add value to provision, enhancing local delivery without duplicating existing services. The partnership also have many years' experience of working with women who have no recourse to public funds; with Black and minority women; marginalised women and women with complex needs.

7. Delivery Plans, Partnership Letters

Ashiana has submitted delivery plans, and partnership letters for Proposal One and Two. If funding is agreed, full partnership agreements will also need to be submitted to officers.

8. Summary of Budgets: option one and two

A summary of the proposed budget and allocation to partner organisations is at Appendix One.

Officers can provide any further information on the two options on request.

Recommendations:

The Grants Committee is recommended to agree that, subject to continued availability of resources and delivery of the outcomes and meeting the London Councils conditions as set out in a grant agreement between London Councils and the applicant the award of grant of to Ashiana of £162,950 for the period 1 April 2016- 31 March 2017.

Background papers

2013-15 Grants Programme, Grants Committee, 20 February 2013

Minutes, Grants Committee, 20 February 2013

Eaves Urgency Report, 22 October 2015

Ashiana Proposal One and Two, 31 January 2016

Performance of Grants Programme 2015-16, Grants Committee, 18 November 2015

Equalities implications

London Councils has, in exercising its functions under the Grants Scheme, in setting the policy for grant-making and funding services through the commissioning process which has been adopted (as noted above), complied with the general equalities duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. Transferring funding to another provider to maintain currently funded services to vulnerable beneficiaries is, in the circumstances, a proportionate means by which London Councils can continue to meet its equalities duties in the exercise of its grants functions.

Financial implications

The Director of Corporate Resources reports that option one can be accommodated within the budget for 2016-17 as it represents the same value of grant originally awarded to Eaves on 26 November 2014 for the period 2015-17 and within the budget agreed at Leaders' Committee 8 December 2015. Option two represents an additional £22,000 which had not been previously allocated. The Director of Corporate Resources advises members that based on typical levels of underspend returned to London Councils in a year, that it would be reasonable to assume that £22,000 would become available through underspend during 2016-17. It is forecast that at least £81,475 will be returned to reserves during 2015/16 with regard to payments originally allocated to Eaves.

Legal implications

London Councils must, in taking its decisions in the exercise of its functions, act within its powers and exercise those powers lawfully and rationally, taking into account all relevant matters (and ignoring those which are irrelevant). Reasons must be given for the decision which is taken.

Appendix One: Summary of Budgets

Partner	Proposal One	Cost Areas	Proposal Two	Cost Areas
Solace	£19,894	Direct Costs: £18,085 (inc: 0.5FTE floating support; volunteer costs) Indirect Costs: £1,809 (inc: management/admin charge 10%)	£29,976	Direct Costs: £27,251 (inc: 0.8FTE floating support; volunteer costs) Indirect Costs: £2,725 (inc: management/admin charge 10%)
Nia	£70,000	Direct Costs: £63,636 (inc: 1x senior worker; direct line management; sessional hours) Indirect Costs: £6,364 (inc: management/admin charge 10%)	£80,000	Direct Costs: £72,638 (inc: 1x senior worker; direct line management; sessional hours) Indirect Costs: £7,362 (inc: management/admin charge 10%)
Ashiana	£61,200	Direct Costs: £55,637 inc: 3 days (pw) immigration adviser; 1day (pw) outreach/advocacy worker; shift work; bed spaces) Indirect Costs: £5,563 (inc: partnership central core costs 10%)	£61,200	Direct Costs: £55,637 inc: 3 days (pw) immigration adviser; 1day (pw) outreach/advocacy worker; shift work; bed spaces) Indirect Costs: £5,563 (inc: partnership central core costs 10%)
Ashiana	£11,856	Lead partnership costs: 7.27% contribution for management, monitoring, evaluation.	£13,774	Lead partnership costs: 7.44% contribution for management, monitoring, evaluation
Total	£162,950		£184,950	